



Songs from the OZARKS

J. M. HICKMAN

480

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

By J. M. HICKMAN

SONGS FROM
THE OZARKS

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By J. M. HICKMAN
Earle, Arkansas

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

By
J. M. HICKMAN

PRESS OF
The Memphis Linotype Printing Company
Memphis, Tenn.
Second Edition

DEDICATION

To my friends at Earle, Arkansas, this little volume
is lovingly dedicated by the Author.

J. M. HICKMAN.

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WHAT THE CRITIC SAID

Your verses are not culture-wrought,
Is what the critic said;
Though many are quite full of thought
And will be oft re-read.

The grammar seems to be all right
And all the meter true;
Sometimes you reach to lofty height—
Again, you sink with blue.

Sometimes with hope you take your flight
And sing a happy strain,
And then, cast down in darkest night,
Seem full of grief and pain.

Sometimes with God you seem to dwell
And climb the mountain's side;
And then, like demon from old hell,
You seek from Him to hide.

Sometimes your heart seems beauty's home,
And flowers seem to bloom;
And then, like wayward child to roam,
Seems full of dismal gloom.

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Sometimes you seem all full of doubt
And cast the Christ aside;
Again, with joy you sing and shout,
And with Him close abide.

Oh, man! What's weaving in your brain
To call forth all of this?
Have you lived both a life of pain
And then a life of bliss?

Does old remorse, in looking back,
Call forth the anguished cry,
And wring your soul with torture's rack,
That you so moan and sigh?

Let future life with faith attain
Forgiveness for the past,
For God is able to sustain,
And then your joy will last.

REPLY TO THE CRITIC

I care not how the poets wrote,
Nor for the rules they had;
I sing the songs of my own note,
Let them be good or bad.

I sing not for the lord or squire—
For them I do not tone
The muse's harp strings, but my lyre
Is for the poor alone.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Let others copy all they please
The poets of the past;
I'll bend to them no humble knees,
Though my songs may not last.

At least the songs will be my own,
That from my heart were born;
And as I do not seek renown,
I do not fear their scorn.

If but the poor and humble sing
A single song of mine,
That to them happiness will bring,
I'll say the pay's divine.

If gathered 'round their hearth at night
All grieved and full of care,
One song of mine would make them light,
T'will be good pay, I swear.

If humble hearts in after years
Should say his heart was love—
He helped to wipe away our tears,
T'would give me joy above.

Then others may sing as they will
To educated ears,
I'll raise my voice in humble trill
To wipe away poor tears.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

PROLOGUE

I come, untrammelled by man's art,
And sing without a guiding chart;
Uncultured though the songs may be,
They're caught from nature's melody.
In nature, I have heard the song
Of happy creatures all day long,
Who live in peace, without a greed,
Contented with their daily need.

I've always loved the woods and streams—
Have always, in my youthful dreams,
Built rustic cabin in some nook,
And there, with nature for my book,
Away from all the mad'ning strife,
Serenely pass this earthly life,
Without a thought of wealth or creed,
Content with just my daily need.

I've seen leaves turning sere and brown,
With streaks of red and gold to crown;
I've seen them floating down the streams
Like fairies in sweet childhood dreams.
I've caught the sound of swaying breeze
A-rustling through the top of trees;
I've listened, and I've caught the fall
Of leaves that dropped to autumn's call.

I would not swap the mocking bird
For any music that I've heard,
Though Wagner'd be at organ grand,
Accompanied by Sousa's band:

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The warbling of his wild, sweet note,
Born in his heav'nly music throat,
Just makes the very soul aspire
To join the angels in God's choir.

I would not swap the twilight hour
For all the city's 'lectric power;
I would not give old nature's green
For any city park I've seen.
I would not give the moon's soft rays
For any of their great white ways;
I'd rather sleep on beds of moss,
Than on a velvet mattress toss.

I sing the song of woods and streams,
Of starlight nights and pale moonbeams,
Of mossy dells and vine-clad nooks,
And rippling, dripping, gladsome brooks.
I sing of reed and rush and brush,
Of clustered fern, with a green flush;
Of graceful boughs and dark green leaves,
And trailing vines that interweaves.

I sing just as I see and hear,
The songs of nature, ever dear;
The sounds I hear beneath the trees—
Of swelling buds and busy bees.
I sing the song of hill and vale,
Of mocking bird, and thrush, and quail;
Of little wren and oriole,
Of chipmunk, and the velvet mole.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I sing of winds that softly blow,
Of evening sunset's golden glow;
Of azure skies with tinted hue,
And morning glories freshed with dew.
I sing, untrammeled by man's art,
The songs of dear old nature's heart,
The songs of winds and woods and streams,
And starlight nights, and pale moonbeams.

EYES OF BLUE

I love the woods—indeed I do—
I loves the hills and vales;
I love the violets so blue,
And flowers in the dales.

I love the honeysuckle, too,
And dogwoods, all in bloom;
I love sweet blossoms freshed with dew,
And reeds and rush in plume.

I love the leaves that fall from trees,
I love the greenwood brush,
I love to lie in silent ease
Amidst old nature's hush.

I love the wren, the sparrow, too,
The little thrush and quail;
I love the birds of red and blue,
And mocking birds I hail.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I love the lark, the whippoorwill,
The jaybird and the dove;
I love the gentle flowing rill—
They lift my thoughts above.

But, best of all, I love a girl—
A girl with eyes of blue;
A saucy, teasing blue-eyed girl,
Who says she loves me, too.

A PICTURE ON A CALENDAR

A mountain reaching to the skies,
A valley spread to view;
A cabin on a gentle rise,
And clouds o'erhead of blue;
The cattle wading in the stream,
The sunset in the west;
A picture lovely as a dream,
That lulls you to sweet rest.

'TIS A BONNY LAND

'Tis a bonny land of ours,
Where the pinks and daisies grow,
And full many lovely flowers,
With a blushing beauty blow;
And the birds forever singing
With a melody so sweet,
That the soul with rapture winging,
Keeps true measure with each beat.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

There are mossy dells and bowers,
Where the lassies love to go;
And the sunset's golden showers
Fills the western sky with glow.
And the trees and vines and creepers,
With a lovely, verdant green,
Mingled with the voice of reapers,
Adds a cadence to the scene.

There are hills and verdant valleys,
There are lofty mountain heights,
Where the footstep ever dallies,
For the soul in them delights.
There are crystal streams of water,
There are pearly azure skies,
And you linger and you loiter,
While your heart emits sweet sighs.

Oh, there never was another
Like our own sweet Southern land;
For the angels are its mother
And its beauty doth expand.
With its many buds and blossoms,
Which in balmy breezes blow,
It just fills all hearts and bosoms
With the beauty of its glow.

BLUE BIRDS

An ardent little lover
Flew to an apple tree,
Where a demure little maiden
Was singing cheerily.

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit, to-whee,"
Said the demure little maiden,
"Do you mean that, sir, for me?"

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit, to-whee,
Means, demure little maiden,
Will you my sweetheart be?"

Said the demure little maiden
That sang so cheerily,
"What have you, sir, to offer,
As an inducement to me?"

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit, to-whee!
I've a pleasant little bower
Upon a cherry tree."

Then the demure little maiden
Just hung her head and sighed,
And spread her tiny little wings
And floated by his side.

BLUE-EYED GIRLS

I love the merry, blue-eyed girl,
With dimples on her chin,
And many a sunny, flashing curl,
And mouth just made to grin.
The girl who frankly looks at you,
With courage true and straight,
Bespeaking nature good and true,
Without envy or hate.

The girl who's not afraid to be
Just plain girl, every day;
Who's always singing cheerily,
At work, or at her play.
The girl who smiles on every one,
At home or on the street,
Yet full of mischief, full of fun—
Oh, such a girl's a treat.

The healthy freckled girl, you know,
With sunshine in her face,
Who loves to tease dear father so,
When he's about the place.
The girl who romps and plays tomboy,
When brother is at home,
With heart just full of sunny joy,
And cheeks like Southern gloam.

THE SOUTHLAND

Oh, land of sweet dreams
Where balmy winds blow,
And clear rippling streams
Of cool waters flow,
With ripple and splash
And many a dash
Against the green bank
Where nature grows rank—
I love thy green vales,
Thy glens and thy dells,
Where nature prevails
And godliness dwells.

Oh, land of the rose,
Magnolia and pine,
Where sweet ozone blows
'Midst tangle and vine,
And violets blue,
With heavenly hue
Peep up from the soil,
Where nature doth toil—
I love every breeze,
Each beam of sunshine,
The swaying of trees—
The music divine.

Oh, land of wee rills
And clear running brooks,
Where mocking bird trills
Amidst shady nooks,

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And thrush, wren and quail
With songs do regale
Full many an hour
Beneath shady bower—
I love every scene,
Each twig and each flow'r
In old nature green,
That upward doth tow'r.

Oh, land of my youth,
That ever doth seem
A sunland of truth,
A sweet fairy dream,
Where lovely maids blush
With roseate flush
That melts with its glow
Like delicate snow—
My heart ever beats
With a love that's divine
Amidst thy retreats—
Oh, land of sunshine!

BUT FEW KNOW

But few know who or what is God—
Most bow themselves beneath a rod
Of priestly craft and man-made creed
That falls far short of their real need.

The best we make of life on earth
Is, render to all men their worth;
Be honest, fair, and truly square—
'Twill make a heaven anywhere.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THE MURMUR OF THE WATERS

Oh, the murmur of the water
As it gently flows along,
Is the sweetest of all music,
Singing soft its low sweet song.
Oh, the harmony, all joining
With the gentle zephyr's breeze,
And the melody of birds that
Sing in top of swaying trees.

Oh, I love to hear the music
As it ripples near the bank
And refreshes all the willows
There, so green and tall and rank.
Oh, it 'minds me of sweet heaven,
Where the waters murmur low,
As I lie full length upon the
Bank, and watch the sunset glow.

Oh, my thoughts go drifting outward
With the pleasant flowing tide,
And I dream of heav'nly mansion,
Where at last I shall abide.
Oh, it lifts my soul in rapture
As it murmurs soft and clear,
And my heart it seems to capture
With a melody of cheer.

Oh, the glinting of the evening's
Sun upon the waters shine,
With a tinting of the rainbow's
Hues, that seems almost divine.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, I drink refreshing nectar
From its bosom of pure gold,
And I bathe in gleams of glory,
With a joy that can't be told.

Oh, there never was such music
As the waters sweet and low,
Like the chiming of a distant
Bell, as on they gently flow.
Oh, it lifts your thoughts to heaven
And your soul it seems to rest,
As the waters sing in harmony
With the sunset in the west.

WHY DO WE CLING?

Why do we cling to mortal life,
And every day repeat
The same old daily struggling strife,
With others to compete?
We wake at morn and tasks begin,
Where ended day before—
With earnest hope of heart to win
Great wealth to lay in store.

Sometimes we weep, sometimes we smile,
Sometimes we dance and sing;
Sometimes we sleep and rest awhile
And dream eternal spring.
Yet as each morning dawn appears
We face the same old strife;
Again the struggling and the tears
Of this old mortal life.

WHEN THE HEART IS GENTLY THROBBING

When your heart is gently throbbing
With a love for fellow man,
And your soul is yearning strongly
Just to help one, if you can—
Oh, the days, they just seem brighter
As you journey long life's road,
And your burdens all seem lighter—
For love lightens all the load.

When your heart with love expanding
Stretches forth a helping hand,
To some fellow who is stranding
On an isle of sinking sand,
You will feel a stir within you
That will fill you with delight,
And his glance of adoration
Will be a pleasant sight.

Oh, the joy of helping onward
Some poor fellow full of care—
Some poor, hopeless, struggling fellow,
Almost full of dark despair,
Just to make hope seem some brighter,
Just to cheer him on his way;
Just to make his burdens lighter,
Just his fearsome thoughts allay.

Ah, 'twill fill your heart with gladness,
Make your burden light to bear—
It will drive away all sadness,
Make you welcome everywhere;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And when twilight draws about you
In the evening of your life,
Throngs of friends will gather 'round you
As you leave this worldly strife.

WHEN LAST I LAY ME DOWN

When last I lay me down to sleep
Until the break of day,
I wish not for my friends to weep
O'er my poor frame of clay.

I merely wish to rest in peace
Amongst the silent dead,
Where earthly troubles all will cease,
And flowers overspread.

A plain white stone to mark the place
Where I am to be found,
My name, just traced upon its face,
Then—silence all around.

Then, when your heart is troubled, friend,
Just come to my green mound,
And with my spirit silent blend,
'Midst solitude profound.

THE BOY WHO WHISTLES

I love a boy who whistles
With a merry face, and gay—
Who cares naught for the thistles
That one meets with every day;
A boy that's always merry,
Just full of prank and play—
Whose face is ever cheery,
Like the blushing month of May.

Who does not fear the sunshine,
Nor the freckles on his face;
Who climbs the tangled grape vine,
With a squirrel's nimble grace.
Who loves the hills and mountains,
And is ever near the place
Where flows old nature's fountains,
In a silv'ry splashing race.

Who loves the cooling water
In the sunny month of June,
Where footsteps ever loiter,
For he hates to leave so soon.
The streams are ever smiling
And he is always in tune,
With puckered lips beguiling—
He is whistling morn and noon.

I love the careless free heart
Of the barefoot freckled boy,
The boy who takes his own part
In this world of grief and joy;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The boy that's ever beaming
With a smile that doth decoy,
And sunny face all gleaming
From a heart that's full of joy.

LET ME PILLOW MY HEAD

Let me pillow my head where the moonbeams will spread
All of their soft, sweet glow—
With the trees overhead, and the earth for my bed,
Where zephyrs softly blow.

Let me dream a sweet dream, while its soft milky stream
Cast shadows all around.
Catch the beauties that beam from each soft chastened
gleam,
'Midst solitude profound.

Let me drift with each wave, like a worn wearied slave
Who has found balm at last;
Let me rest in its rays 'neath the magnolia bays,
Forgetting all the past.

Let me bathe in the stream of its soft milky cream,
While the shadows come and go;
Let me drink in each beam of the glimmering gleam,
That I may softly glow.

Let me feel a release, of life's troubles a surcease,
And sink unto my rest;
Let me sleep in sweet peace, while the soft rays increase,
To light me to the blest.

PERHAPS ABOVE

Perhaps above—unknown to us below—
Those whom we love, to God do daily go,
And kneeling there, before the heavenly throne,
Plead with sweet prayer, that mercy may be shown.

Perhaps unknown, they come to us in dreams,
And in soft tone, like gentle flowing streams,
Whisper a song so full of hope's sweet cheer
It makes us strong, and drives away all fear.

Perhaps—who knows? God sends them, when despair
Our heart overflows, to lighten all our care?
He knows our frame, that we are naught but dust,
Helpless in sin and shame. We can but trust.

Perhaps for this, He sends them to us here,
To fill with bliss and sinking spirits cheer.
For God doth know we need encouragement—
Like the rainbow to men of old, was sent.

Perhaps it may that in God's wisdom way,
Just to allay our fearsome thoughts each day,
He lets them come to hover 'bout our bed,
And comfort's crumb, o'er all our troubles spread.

Perhaps—but, nay, I will not further write,
For every day we see God's love and might;
Let us but trust in love and confidence,
For great and just is His benevolence.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN I DIE

When I die, lay me away
Where sweet flower leaves will spray
All their sweetness on my head,
Making fair my cold, damp bed.

Border all around my grave
Every flower that I crave;
Give to each one proper care—
Make the spot to blossom fair.

Cover, then, the mound with green,
Adding to the pleasant scene;
Come, then, sit where beauty's rife
And dream of immortal life.

YOU ASK ME WHY?

You ask me why I waste my time
In singing songs, in verse and rhyme?
I hear old nature sweetly sing
A song, that makes the welkin ring.
The buds and blossoms swelling there
With fragrance sweet that fills the air,
Have voices full of melody
That somehow fills me with their glee.

My heart responsive, full of love,
In gratitude to God above,
Just overflows without restraint
And tries in feeble words to paint

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The glories of creation here,
Upon this dear old hemisphere,
And like a mocking bird repeat
The songs I hear in nature sweet.

I never cross a hill or dale
But what old nature has a tale
To tell me, of some new-born thing,
Whose beauty cause a song to spring
Up in my heart, and I would fain
Tell it to all in rythmic strain,
That they might upward lifted be,
Love God and nature, just like me.

It matters not the time of year—
Old nature's to me ever dear;
Though leaves are gone, and trees are bare,
She still has many beauties rare,
And there is music in the sound
Of dead leaves rustling on the ground;
And even in those leaves you see
A trace that's left of spring's beauty.

Each creature has prepared before
For what old nature had in store,
And snug they are, in nest or hole—
Be it a squirrel, fox or mole,
And there in happy comfort stay
Until cold winter's passed away.
At peep of spring they venture out
And scamper joyfully about.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Each has a note of gratitude,
Though to your ear it might sound rude,
Yet each one's note, though it sounds odd,
Just reaches to the ear of God.
He bends and listens to each note,
Though coming from a muffled throat—
Reciprocates to each one's call,
Just as He heeds the sparrow's fall.

In spring, when everything is green,
The swelling buds and flowers are seen;
The birds, all mating here and there,
With love's sweet song, float in the air.
They build their nests on bough and limb,
'Midst noisy life they raise a hymn;
I'd rather hear the song birds sing
Than be a nation's pampered king.

Then can you ask me why my time
Is often spent in verse and rhyme?
Great God! Deliver me from wealth,
So often gained by wrongs and stealth,
By men garbed in religion's cloak,
Who sit in the church pews and croak,
And sing, and pray, with pious air,
While all the time a devil's there!

Who possibly the day before
Put some poor widow out of door,
With little children in bare feet,
To wander homeless in the street!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'd rather live 'mongst nature's haunts
Than gilded halls of wealth and vaunts,
And eat the nuts and fruits found there,
Than fill such poor hearts with despair.

For 'mongst the woods and limpid streams
Your heart is filled with wondrous dreams;
No thought in you to over-ride,
No vanity or foolish pride;
But full of love and sweet content,
Your very soul's with nature blent.
Then, as the days pass swiftly by,
Your heart emits a soft sweet sigh.

I do not call it wasting time,
To sing a song in verse or rhyme,
God whispers, and I hear Him call,
And sing the song, that it may fall
On hearts that's full of sympathy,
For those who live in misery;
And hearing, lift those fallen up,
And take from them the bitter cup.

This is my mission here on earth;
May I prove worthy of my birth,
May all my songs float high and wide
And their influence over-ride
The mean and low-born, filthy schemes
Of foxy scoundrels, in their dreams,
Who seek to take advantage here,
Regardless of the poor one's tear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN THE FULL MOON

When the full moon is shining bright,
And stars above are gleaming;
And soft, pale rays of milky light,
All o'er the earth are beaming,
I love to walk beneath the trees,
'Midst shadows softly glowing,
And feel the gentle evening breeze
Upon my cheeks a-blowing.

I love to dream a silent dream,
While nature seems reposing;
And listen to the rhythmic stream,
Its secrets all disclosing.
'Tis then I lift my heart above
To God, the great Creator,
And realize He rules with love,
All in this world's theater.

OH, FRIEND OF MINE

Oh, friend of mine, the golden glow
Of youth is gone—my head's like snow;
And often now I moan and sigh
For dear old days that have passed by.

They never can return again—
Those dear old days so free from pain—
Those golden years of youthful dreams,
So full of joy and sunny beams.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In misty vision I can see
The winding road that used to be;
The trees that shaded by the way,
The place where once we loved to play.

I hear again the bird's sweet song—
The mocking bird that trilled so strong—
I see and hear the bees all hum—
The orchard and the rip'ning plum.

I see the tassels on the corn,
The tangled thicket full of thorn,
The fields of grain spread out to view,
And sunny skies of deepest blue.

Oh, friend of mine, when we were young,
Sweet hope was bright—the birds all sung.
But now, in looking back today,
The hope is gone—has passed away.

But, friend of mine, old mem'ry's dream
Brings to the heart a sunny beam;
And though a tear bedims the eye,
Still joy is felt in each soft sigh.

The past sweet dreams can ne'er return,
But through that past we may discern
More clearly what life's values are,
And future life may yield a star.

Then, friend of mine, at the last scene,
When the sun has set with golden sheen,
May you pass out without a sigh,
And upward wing to God on high.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IF IN MY VERSE

If in my crude and dreamy verse
Some pleasure will instill,
And somewhat of your cares reverse—
It will its mission fill.

In after years, when left alone,
And hope has met defeat,
Should song of mine for grief atone—
Then, its mission is complete.

WHEN THE HEART'S FULL OF LOVE

When the heart's full of love,
And your thoughts are above—
And the soul is content,
And the mind with God's blent—
You will feel a sweet calm,
Like a soft healing balm,
For your life will be joy,
With good things to employ.

When at peace with all men,
With your voice or with pen,
You can speak, or can write,
Some sweet song of delight,
That will fill with a thrill
Some poor heart that is ill,
And restore it to health,
By the pow'r of love's wealth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Then a joy will be thine
That's akin to divine,
For you'll feel in your soul
That the Lord has control;
And your smile will entrance,
Though it be but a glance,
Every one that you meet,
In a palace or street.

Oh, the wealth of great love
That descends from above,
When our hearts are all right—
Fills the soul with delight.
And we just love all things,
And a song upward springs,
Not a cloud in the sky,
For our Savior is nigh.

I CAN NEVER RETURN

I can never return where the journey began,
For the brambles are thick, where the old highway ran;
The footpath is gone—not a sign or a track,
Nor a guiding post, that will point the way back.

I started the journey to the land of dreams
In the spring of the year, when the sunshine beams;
The birds were all singing a sweet song of cheer,
My footsteps were lightsome—not a sigh or a tear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The murmur of waters that rippled along,
Just sang to me daily, a sweet gurgling song;
And the rustling of leaves that swayed to the breeze,
Displayed all their beauty in the top of the trees.

But the frost of the winter, nipped the blooms of the
spring,
And blighted all beauty with a cold, icy sting;
It left me all saddened a pathway to tread,
'Midst nature all barren and hopes that were dead.

Like a child that is lost in the midst of a wood,
I circle about—would return if I could;
But I've wandered afar—bewildered I stand,
And am lost in a wilderness of sinking sand.

FOND MEMORY

Fond memory will ever trace,
In glancing back the years,
Each feature of your dear old face,
And fill my eyes with tears.

'Twill bring to mind the days endeared
That never can return,
But which will ever be revered
And cause the heart to burn.

The pleasant jaunts by lakes and streams,
O'er hills and meadows green,
Will oft return in silent dreams,
And thoughts of you, I ween.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The music of the rippling brook,
The gentle zephyr's breeze,
The trout we caught upon the hook,
The grand, majestic trees—

Each will again be brought to view,
And many a wildwood scene,
As often as I think of you,
Will also intervene.

Though age may bend and bow the frame,
And locks turn white like snow,
I'll think of you as just the same
You were in youth's young glow.

And when at last unto the dust,
Our bodies, they consign,
E'en then, while moldering in the crust,
May both our memories twine.

UPON THE LEVEL

Do you meet upon the level?
Said my wife to me, one day.
I heard you say that Masons did—
Now, is this true, I say?

'Twas only yesterday you said,
Let not the children play
With those of poor old Mr. Head,
For they were common clay.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

That we could not afford to be
On social terms with them;
That our select society
Would banish and condemn.

Now, say, is that your Masonry,
And that your boasted creed?
If so, I cannot fail to see
It needs some love to breed.

I dropped my head in humble shame,
I sought excuse to find,
For poor old Head, a Mason, was
A brother true and kind.

And careful since I've been, my friend,
Of thoughts that inward dwell,
For like dear Robert Burns, I say,
Such thoughts are born in hell.

I'M FOOTSORE AND WEARIED

I'm footsore and wearied with climbing the hill,
The ascent before me is yet higher still;
The footpath is narrow and winding in way,
I scarcely can finish the journey today.

The burden I carry is heavy indeed,
And fain would I tarry for rest that I need;
But voices are calling for me to ascend,
And up, though appalling, the journey to end.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I struggle and stumble and fall by the way—
My footsteps quite often slip on the soft clay;
Though strength is declining, I dare not to stop,
For while the sun's shining, I must reach the top.

Just stumbling and struggling with each step I take,
Cheered by the spring's bubbling, my soul's thirst to
 slake,

I'm nearing the haven, the haven of rest,
I'll soon end the journey and be with the blest.

CATHERINE EUGENE

Wee, tender little violet,
 With lovely eyes of blue,
Like diamonds in a jewel set
 Of purest water, true—
I catch the innocent sweet beam
 That sparkles in each eye—
Like summer's chastened evening's gleam
 Upon an azure sky.

I would thy feet may ever tread
 In paths where flowers blow,
And though they droop and petals shed—
 May your life sweetly glow.
May hope in joy's fruition end
 As each year passes by,
And may your spirit ever blend
 With that of God on high.

I PLUCKED A ROSE

I plucked a rose—'twas blushing red,
Like a young bride in bridal bed;
Its beauty lived a few brief hours,
Then fading, fell in petal showers.

The petals lay in beauty there,
Reminding of the rose so fair;
But like lost virtue's darkened stain,
The rose can never bloom again.

The blushing beauty of its youth
Was plucked from stem without a ruth;
Now, like a maid who gave her all,
The leaves are tramped on as they fall.

The odor sweet that once was there
No longer scents the evening air;
But like a corpse, its petals pale,
Have lost their strength and now are stale.

Oh, pause, sweet maid with beauty's eye—
Learn loss of virtue is to die!
Learn that to trust men on this earth
Will make you curse the day of birth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

YOU WILL FIND A FEW MASONS THERE

From the cold, distant land of Arctic zone,
Where the bleak winds ever do sigh and moan—
From far away Afric's hot bleaching sand,
Where the sons of Ham inhabit the land—
From the tropical clime of Mexico,
Where the warm gulf stream doth ever flow—
From the tangled thicket of Amazon,
Where the great, great river doth ever run—
From the east to the west, from the north to the south,
In the land of rain, or the land of drouth—
Where the sunshine beams or the zephyrs blow,
Or ever is seen perpetual snow—
Where flowers bloom in perpetual spring,
Or blighted is beauty with icy sting—
Or song birds singing with every breath,
Or on the desert as silent as death—
Among all the races of this old earth,
From the breath of God that was given birth—
Be they white, or yellow, or black or red,
With palace or tent, or tree overhead—
You will always find a few Masons there,
Who meet upon the level, and part upon the square.

'TIS BEST

'Tis best to bathe in all the gleams
Of sunny joys on earth—
To catch the golden happy beams,
As they are given birth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The heart that makes the face to smile
Is an inheritance—
That will all gloomy thoughts beguile,
And happiness enhance.

Each sunny beam of golden sheen
Gives pleasure to the eye,
But as dark clouds shift in between,
The heart emits a sigh.

Though transient is each sunny ray,
'Tis best to count it gain;
Tomorrow, clouds may spread our way,
And fill the heart with pain.

TINKLING OF THE ICE

Did you ever hear the tinkling
Of the ice in times that's past—
When your throat was simply parching
Like a redhot furnace blast?

Oh, the music is entrancing
As you hear the cold ice clink—
And you almost feel like dancing
As you greedy grab and drink.

Oh, the joy, delicious pleasure,
When you press it to your lips—
And enjoyment without measure
Feel, when down your throat it slips;
How it gurgles in its journey
As it cools the fevered breast,
And you turn upon your pillow,
Feeling that you have been blest.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, I tell you, for enjoyment,
When you've been the merry round—
On the night, when for employment,
Such a jolly crowd you found—
That the greatest of all pleasure,
Is not found in sin and vice—
But it's just a glass of water,
With a piece or two of ice.

Oh, you may despise the water
When the whiskey is around—
But by daylight the next morning,
For ice water you'll be bound;
And you'll press the button roughly
With the call for water boy—
And the echo of his footsteps,
Will just fill you full of joy.

Then you'll lie with misty feeling,
While the webs within you weave—
And remorse o'er conscience stealing—
Though half drunk, will make you grieve;
And you'll swear in drunken sorrow,
That you'll cut the habit out—
And forget before the morrow—
To indulge another bout.

Yet there's joy, though it is harmful,
On most any pleasant night—
With a lot of jolly fellows,
While old barleycorn's in sight—

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Just to sit around a table,
Pass the bottle to and fro—
And take a drink for Auld Lang Syne,
To the friends you used to know.

Oh, congenial is the hour,
Though the pleasure does not last—
For by daylight you'll be sour—
Then you will regret the past;
Oh, 'tis then you'll call for water,
And you'll hurry up the boy,
And the echo of his footsteps
Will just fill your soul with joy.

OH, THE JOY OF SPREADING

Oh, the joy of spreading sunshine
In the pathway of this life;
To drop a love word here and there,
To grow in beauty rife;
To make some saddened heart to smile—
Forgetting all the strife—
Some deed or word that may beguile,
And brighten up a life.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHERE SWEET WATERS FLOW

I long for the pleasure
Of sweet restful peace—
The calm, joyful measure
Of freedom and ease;
To lie in sweet rapture,
'Neath shade of the trees—
Where beauty doth capture,
And bloweth the breeze.

To lie silent dreaming
Where sweet waters flow,
And sunshine is beaming
With radiant glow;
To drift with the sunshine,
Soft sinking in west—
Like an angel divine,
Preparing to rest.

To scent the sweet showers
Of life-giving dew,
While sheltered by bowers
Of nature's green hue;
To hear the soft sighing
Of wind in the trees,
While autumn leaves, dying,
Float out on the breeze.

To hear the sweet purling
Of streamlets that flow,
All dashing and curling,
As onward they go.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

My thoughts ever drifting
With each flowing wave,
Where shadows are shifting
On waters that lave.

Oh, give me the pleasures
And freedom from care—
'Midst old nature's treasures,
And beauties so rare;
Just let me lie dreaming
Beneath the green trees,
With loving thoughts teeming,
And heart at its ease.

SOON WILL COME

Soon will come the twilight evening
When the call to me shall come,
And my soul, with its sweet sheening,
Will ascend to its last home.

Will the veil, to future screening,
Then be parted to my view?
All the mystery's true meaning,
That in life I never knew?

Will its glory, all revealing,
Swell my heart with triumph's song?
Or, still mystery concealing—
Yet my anxious heart prolong?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Will it be an awesome glory
Thund'ring echoes through the skies?
Or, the gladsome sweet old story
Of the Christ, who did arise?

Shall a hallelujah sounding,
Greet me with an angel throng?
Or amongst great billows, bounding,
Shall my soul just float along?

I would fain to know the meaning,
Whether it be joy or woe—
Ere the twilight's last soft gleaming
Folds my soul in its sweet glow.

TO FRIENDS UNKNOWN

Have you ever read a letter—
From some stranger far away—
Who said he'd read your poem,
Published in the news that day?
That it filled his heart with gladness—
And for you he'd ever pray,
For it drove away his sadness—
Though he was aged and gray?

Do you know the joy it gave you
As you read the letter through?
How it made you love the writer—
For he seemed so good and true?

SONGS FROM THE STARKS

How your heart went out toward him—
And you felt as if you knew
The very thoughts that filled him,
As he wrote the words to you.

How it filled your heart with pleasure
As you read it o'er and o'er!
For your joy was without measure—
And you read it just once more!
And you read it to your loved ones,
And then watched them o'er it pore—
Then filed that letter safe away
Amongst your other precious store.

Oh, the joy that it may give you
In the twilight of your life;
When your heart is full of longing,
Sore and sick with mortal strife—
Just as treasure amongst your precious store
And find a beauty rare,
In the loving words addressed to you—
It may brighten up your life.

OH, LITTLE MAID

Oh, little maid with eyes of blue,
Why pensive now and sad?
Your little's heart is true to you,
And this should make you glad.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

What though he danced with other girls,
And scarcely glanced at you!
Your lovely face and head of curls
Was ever in his view.

He's crowned you queen within his heart,
And every beat is true;
He suffers from a jealous dart—
You danced with others, too.

Then smile, sweet maid with love-lit eyes,
And dart a glance his way;
Your heart will throb with glad surprise—
For he'll return that day!

♫ A TRICKLING, TINY SPRING

A trickling, tiny little spring,
Down mountain side doth flow and sing.
It winds around the rocks and roots,
And over many a cascade shoots.

In softest accents sweet and clear,
It sings a song of hope and cheer;
The birds take up the rhythmic notes,
And music swells from gushing throats.

Along its banks of verdant green,
Full many a bud and bloom is seen,
While reed and brush and waving rush,
Puts all the art of man to blush.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In valleys green, 'neath mountain's side,
Forever flows the tiny tide—
Its golden bosom flashing gleams
Of pearly crystals through sunbeams.

I love to lie and drift and dream,
And listen to the little stream,
As on it goes meandering
With rhythmic, low, sweet murmuring.

It softly sighs with balmy breeze,
And joins its voice with swaying trees;
While I lie silent, drifting on
To dreamy lands of misty dawn.

MY OLD BLACK MAMMY

How well I remember
When I was a child,
My dear old black mammy,
So gentle and mild.
I see the bandana
That covered her head,
As kindly she tucked me
To sleep in my bed.

Her face, though a black one,
Just filled you with love;
For true was the heart beats
That came from above;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Her arms ever ready
To gather me in,
To steady when stumbling,
And keep me from sin.

In sickness and sorrow,
Old mammy was there,
Just like a dear angel
In answer to prayer.
'Twas comfort to see her
In such times of need,
For mammy would heal you,
And cheerfulness breed.

At calling of country—
And father obeyed—
Old mammy was true blue,
And with mother stayed.
In silence of midnight,
When hearts beat with dread—
Old mammy would hover,
And watch 'round our bed.

Her comforting presence
Would calm us to sleep—
For mammy was right there,
To guard and to keep.
She watched o'er our slumbers
With sweet, loving care,
And cheered my dear mother
When filled with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I know she's in heaven,
And free from all care;
Her face, though a black one,
Is beautiful there—
For Jesus, the dear Lord,
Just views the inside,
And draws near the kind heart,
Where love doth abide.

She's waiting in glory
With those gone before,
To welcome her laddie
To that blessed shore;
I know when the time comes
For me to ascend—
Old mammy will be there—
My needs to attend.

RETROSPECT

Tonight I sit in grievous thought,
Reviewing what my life has wrought;
Like writings that Belshazzar saw—
The backward glance fills me with awe.

In balancing the good with bad,
The trial sheet makes me feel sad;
For as the good is credited
So are the bad things debited.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The debit sheet is very long,
And shows the things that I've done wrong;
While here and there's a heavy stroke,
To indicate the hearts I've broke.

The strokes are light where I've done good,
Because I failed in what I should;
The debit side's a heavy cross—
I've charged it off to profit's loss.

The loss I never can regain;
I cannot take back things that pain—
For even though I made amend,
The sheet still shows I lost a friend.

ALL THE LITTLE BIRDS ARE SINGING

All the little birds are singing,
Singing a sweet melody,
And the hills and dales are ringing,
Ringing with the jubilee.

Buds and blossoms all are swelling,
Bursting into beauty rare;
'Midst old nature's garden dwelling,
Many are the flowers fair.

Trickling streams are gently flowing,
Flowing near the mountain sides,
And the sunshine cause a glowing,
Golden glowing on the tides.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Gentle zephyrs softly blowing,
Fanning all the valley green;
Spring sunshine instead of snowing,
Glinting with a lovely sheen.

In the distance, lofty mountains
Reaching up toward the skies;
Down the side flow raging fountains,
Causing misty clouds to rise.

Golden glints through them are streaming
With a rainbow's tinting hue,
All the colors softly beaming
With a tint of lovely blue.

Overhead the trees are greening,
And the birds are nesting there;
Soon their young they will be weaning,
And their songs will fill the air.

Underneath the trees I'm dreaming,
While sweet music fills the air;
And my soul with love is teeming,
For I'm full of heartfelt prayer.

CRITICISM

You've bruised and stabbed my tender heart,
And lowered its conceit
By criticism's cruel dart,
And smothered it complete.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

OPTIMISM

I cannot pierce the distant veil of time,
Nor can I tell what future years may bring;
I joy in present things that seem sublime,
And with contented happiness I sing.

I cannot change the things that God ordains,
Nor will resentment make my burdens less;
If He has willed that I should suffer pains,
He also wills some other things that bless.

Each day, I see more plainly the great truth,
That God, in wisdom doeth all things best;
He checks the impulses of man in youth,
That in his elder days, he may be blest.

To youth, all future years are full of hope,
Nor dims an azure sky to distant view;
Bright, pictures all the future horoscope,
And all seems beautiful, and good, and true.

To age, the future years loom not so bright,
For past old ghostly fears are frightful still—
The disillusion of youth's dreams cause fright,
And fearsome doubts, the aged heart doth thrill.

But when resigned, we trust it all to God—
Both age and youth are on a level plane;
And to the end, when melted into clod,
What now seems loss, will only prove our gain.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

SWEET THINGS

I can write of sweet things, too,
Like the violet so blue;
Tell you how in woods they grow,
Peeping out with spring's first glow;
Tell you lovers gather them,
Plucking up the roots with stem,
Placing them with tender care
In a vase of costly ware.

Ah, the tint of lovely blue,
Freshed by early morning's dew—
Fills the lover with a bliss
Like the ecstasy of a kiss,
Delicate as a maiden's flush,
Tender as her first love blush;
Melting like a flake of snow
With the warmth of its own glow.

In the likeness of its hue,
Are her eyes of tender blue,
Shyly peeping 'neath the lash,
Love betraying in each flash;
There's a darling dimple, too,
In the cheek that's turned to you,
And sweet cherry lips of bliss,
Aye, inviting for a kiss.

Here's a cluster on a vine—
Grapes all full of juicy wine,
Jocund as a maiden's blood
In first flush of womanhood;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Here's an apple red with glow,
Rip'ning where the blossoms blow;
Robin, on the cherry tree,
To his mate sings merrily.

Little rills and singing brooks,
Mossy dells and pleasant nooks,
Valleys green and flowery dales,
Time of year when spring regales,
Birds all singing in the trees,
Balmy air and busy bees—
I can write of sweet things, too,
And I have—now, say, can't you?

I'VE WANDERED MUCH

I've wandered much from land to land,
A-seeking for prosperity;
And still I live from hand to hand,
But care naught for adversity.

Distance, enchantment lends to view,
Where flowers all bloom gaily;
And freshened by hope's morning dew,
I change domicile daily.

Yet, reimbursement I receive,
That fully doth repay me;
The change of scenes and hopes that weave
In beauty, ever sways me.

Sometimes in valleys I reside,
Then on the hills and mountains,
Just drifting careless with the tide
That's formed by many fountains.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

PINNED TO A DOLL RAFFLED FOR ORPHANS

God is ever a true lover—
Loves through other folks, you know;
Sends his angels down to hover,
And make little faces glow.

In this world He's planted kindness,
That the seed may ever grow,
Though at times it seems all blindness,
Yet sweet blessings ever flow.

Hearts of love are ever ready
A sweet blessing to bestow;
Just believe and stand you steady—
God is watching you below.

God is father, God is mother,
And through others He will care;
In his arms He'll love and smother,
If you will but snuggle there.

May this doll both bless and cheer you—
Give it love and tender care;
Ever keep it close and near you—
Smile each day and grow more fair.

LIVES THERE A MAN?

Lives there a man on this old earth,
A real true man of noble worth?
A man that's always true and square—
In all his dealings clean and fair?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A man, to golden rule, sincere,
Who feels within a conscience clear?
Who strikes a chalk line true and straight,
And will not from it deviate?

Is such a man amongst the great—
Receiving honors from the State?
Does honest conscience rule his mind,
Or wealth, through graft, just make him blind?

Does the best good for humankind
Encourage him to seek and find
Some just law that may govern all—
The poor and low, the rich and tall?

Is such an one amongst the poor
That passes daily by your door,
Who gives an honest full day's work,
Who never does his labor shirk?

Is such amongst the middle class,
Who, by the golden rule, can pass?
Who, honest in his heart, can say,
I'm clean and fair in every way?

Is there amongst the ministry
One heart that's full of charity?
One heart that equals rich and poor,
And levels both at his church door?

Oh, show me just one man on earth
Possessed of true and noble worth;
One man that's always true and square
In all his dealings, clean and fair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I LIFT MY HEART

I lift my heart to Thee, oh God,
Amidst the mountains of Thy love;
Where nature's green o'erlays the sod,
Refreshed by showers from above.

Eternal blessings ever flow
From the great fountains of Thy heart,
Like many waters, sweet and low,
To quench the thirst of panting hart.

The beauty that is spread to view
From every lofty mountain peak,
The valleys green, and skies of blue,
Of Thy great love doth ever speak.

Oh, what is man, that Thou dost care
To count the hairs of his poor head,
And lift him from his dark despair,
And raise his body from the dead?

'Tis said Thou knowest our poor frame;
That we are naught but grains of sand—
That we are born in sin and shame,
And cannot in Thy presence stand.

Yet Thou dost love each weak one here,
Though poor and humble worms of dust—
And givest to each heart sweet cheer,
For Thou art kind as well as just.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

What wealth can we poor mortals add
Unto the glory of Thy throne?
Thou, who art with all glory clad,
And pow'r to make bread out of stone?

Oh, love, sweet mystery so great,
That fills the Father's heart above,
What is there in poor man's estate
To justify omniscient love?

No merit of Thy love have we,
Nor yet of Him whom Thou didst give
To lift us from sin's misery,
That we might ever with Thee live.

Then help us, Thou Omniscient One,
To merit the great sacrifice
Of Jesus Christ, Thine only Son,
Who dwells with Thee in paradise.

And when our work on earth is done,
And twilight glimmers in the west,
May we go home with sinking sun
To an eternal land of rest.

HAS YOUR SHIP COME IN?

Has your ship come in from the mystic sea,
That sailed from the harbor so gallantly,
With the wave of many a God-speed hand,
On its way to the faraway, dreamy land?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Twas years ago since it sailed with the tide,
With hope for its crew, and faith for its guide,
Yet never a word—though you daily go—
Is heard from the ship—and your heart throbs so!

Has it sunk, think you, with all of its crew?
Been wrecked in the storms that so fiercely blew?
Or is the brave ship still riding the wave,
With its crew of hope still valiant and brave?

Do you still have faith in the ship that sailed
To the land of dreams, in mystery veiled?
Or say you just now, as old age bends the form,
My good ship has foundered—gone done in the
storm!

I STILL HAVE FAITH

Aye, I still have faith in the ship that sailed
To the land of dreams, in mystery veiled;
For my heart still trusts, and I daily go
To the port where the tide doth ebb and flow.

Though the storms may beat, and the waves run high,
Yet behind each cloud is a shining sky;
And though aged now, I am strong and hale,
And I hope some day that I'll greet the sail.

Soon the storm will pass, and the calm will come,
Then the ship will steer for the harbor, home.
And I doubt me not, for my faith is bold,
That it will return with a freight of gold.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

TAKE ME BY THE HAND

Take me by the hand, and lead me
Through the paths of gloomy night,
While the shadows darkly hover
'Twixt me and the fading light.

Bear me o'er the sullen river,
Safely to the other shore,
Where my soul shall rest forever—
Rest to suffer pain no more.

Sing sweet songs while floating over,
Songs, my fainting spirit cheer;
Let them swell in one grand chorus
As the other shore we near.

And, when ended is the journey,
When we've reached the other side,
Take me to my blessed Master,
There forever, to abide.

FORGOTTEN

They gave him a stone
To pillow his head,
Then left him alone
To rest with the dead.

They left him to sleep
In silence profound,
Where green grass would creep
And cover the mound.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A few tears were shed—
A sob and a moan,
A torn heart that bled,
A sigh and a groan.

A neglected grave,
A fallen head stone,
Wild brambles that pave,
Rank weeds overgrown.

And sad is the sound
Of April's rain weep,
That waters the ground
Where wild flowers peep.

The years pass along—
Joy takes place of grief;
A shout and a song,
Ah, mem'ry is brief.

Forgotten and gone—
A spirit once gay
Now waits for the dawn
Of eternal day.

THE SALVATION LASSIE

Oh, there is a winsome lassie,
Dressed in the plainest blue,
And her eyes just flashes sunshine
As she looks straight at you.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, her cheeks are like the roses,
All blushing with a glow,
And her lovely face discloses
A heart that's pure as snow.

Oh, she wears the cutest bonnet
Above her pearly ears,
And the eyes that peep beneath it
Dissolves away all tears.
Oh, her lips are like the berries
Refreshed by morning dew,
And her breath is like the cherries
Of balmy winds own brew.

Oh, her eyes are like the sunbeams
That sparkle in the skies,
So full of tender, loving gleams,
They fill my heart with sighs.
Oh, she is the dearest lassie,
With an air demure and sweet,
And always full of charity,
At home or on the street.

HEARTS THAT BEAT TRUE

There's many a heart that beats real true
Beneath a rough exterior view;
Hearts that are warmer than you may think,
Although the face shows many a kink.

Many a wrinkled and scarred old face
Within, has a heart of love and grace;
While many a face that's fair to view,
Is false at heart and will prove untrue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

ACROSTIC

May fragrant flowers sweetly blow
In paths that you may tread;
Life's sweetness—may it ever glow
Delightful o'er your head.
Rich be your future years, my dear,
Endowed by God on high,
Denying naught but grief's sad tears
Bestowed on those who sigh.
United to the one you love,
Redeeming pledges made,
Ne'er lose your trust in God above,
Each evil thought evade.
These lines apply to future life—
Then you will grow in beauty rife.

MAGNOLIAS BLOOM (Tune: Old Kentucky Home)

Magnolias bloom in my dear old Southern home,
Sweet odors float out on the breeze;
The blossoms loom like a marble palace dome,
'Midst the dark green foliage of the trees.
The alfalfa, now in carpets of deep green,
And clover, is spread out to view;
There's naught to mar, or take from the pleasant scene,
And the skies overhead are ever blue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The corn top's ripe and the cotton is in bloom,
The darkies are resting a spell;
The birds all pipe, and their songs dispel all gloom,
For they seem a happy time to tell.
The pale moon gleams with a soft sweet glowing light,
The shadows all flit to and fro;
The soft sweet beams fills the lover with delight,
While the mock birds cause the heart to glow.

My heart returns, oh, no matter where I roam,
Where the mock bird's song fills the air;
And sadly yearns for the soft sweet Southern gloam,
And the flowers blooming ever fair.
Then take me back to my dear old Southern home,
Where odors float out on the breeze;
Where blossoms loom like a marble palace dome
'Midst the dark green foliage of the trees.

Chorus

Take me back to Dixie,
Oh, take me back, I say;
For my heart returns to my dear old Southern home,
To my dear old Southern home, far away.

THE FAITHFUL FEW

There's a faithful few who are always true,
There are warm heart throbs that will welcome you;
Come, then, in response to this cordial call,
There's a grip of the hand for one and all.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A DRIVE ALONG A COUNTRY ROAD

I was in an open buggy, driving 'long a country road,
Enjoying all the scenery, where nature old abode;
The sun was shining brightly and the flowers were in
bloom,
The trees with dark green foliage were full of birds
and plume.

The air was filled with music, both of birds and busy
bees,
While squirrels darted here and there among the leafy
trees;
The dogwood was in blossom and the honeysuckle, too,
And lovely was the scenery presented to my view.

The cows were browsing lazily upon the carpet green,
While here and there, a-peeping out, a daisy could be
seen;
A crumbling old log cabin, with the roof all caving in,
The chimney built of mud and sticks, showed where man
once had been.

A winding path amid the bush led downward to a spring,
Where many parched thirsts were quenched, while birds
o'erhead did sing;
An old deserted orchard, and a house in distant view,
That called to mind your childhood days, as back your
memory flew.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The cedar and the myrtle trees were there, all full of
bloom,
But, ah, so quiet was the place it filled you with its
gloom;
You saw as in some flimsy dream your mother's smiling
face,
When all about was full of life, and children filled the
place.

You saw the table laden down with much of goodly store,
And heard your little brother Tom a-crying for some
more;
You thought of him, the godly man, who had the church
near by,
Who warned the people of their sins and often made
you cry.

You called to mind when he dropped in, and stayed for
dinner, too,
When all you children had to wait—it made you awful
blue.
How mother, knowing how you felt and fearful of your
cry,
Came out the side door with a plate just brimming full
of pie.

Oh, how it stirred your memory and called back to your
mind
The sweet old days of childhood, when things seemed
good and kind;
When mother tucked you in your bed and fondly kissed
good night
And smiling, said, "Have pleasant dreams," as she put
out the light.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, that I could old time turn back and be a child again,
That I might, in my mother's arms, find soothing for
all pain;
That I might pillow on her breast this aching head of
mine,
While 'round my hungry, yearning form her arms would
me entwine.

THERE NEVER WAS

There never was a picture
That was drawn by human hands,
As pretty as old nature—
Just as old nature stands.

For God created nature
According to His plan;
No art can e'er improve it,
Wrought by the skill of man.

Man imitates sweet roses,
And imitates them well;
But weak, his art discloses,
He cannot make them smell.

Though somewhat like its petals
Of glowing beauty rife,
'Tis but a dead leaf painted—
He cannot give ONE life.

IF WE COULD ONLY TRUST

If we could only wholly trust
And rid our hearts of fear,
And realize that God is just,
His promises sincere;
That His dear hand is stretching out
To draw us to His breast—
We'd leap with joy, and sing and shout,
As close to Him we pressed.

WHEN I WAS A BOY

When I was a boy,
Oh, when I was a boy!
The earth was all green,
And this life was a joy.
My footsteps were light
And the sky ever bright;
I whistled and sang
With a joyous delight.

When I was a boy,
Oh, the pleasure and joy
To ramble the woods,
With naught to annoy;
To wade in the streams
And dream boyish dreams,
And drink in the rays
Of spring's sunny beams.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When I was a boy,
Oh, the streams would decoy,
And whisper a song—
Come now and enjoy.
My bosom is sweet,
Your form I will greet,
And give you the joy
Of a heavenly treat.

When I was a boy,
Oh, the springtime of joy!
The pleasure of youth,
That naught can destroy!
So happy and free,
A heart full of glee,
That I wish once again
Just a boy I could be.

A REVERIE

Sitting by my fireside, silent,
Dreamy visions come to me,
Trooping by in countless numbers,
And amongst them, friend, is thee.

Once again I see the waving
Of the ripn'ning fields of grain,
And I hear the song birds singing—
Mocking, after years of pain.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In the distance, hear the voices
Of the reapers' evening song;
See the sunset, golden glowing,
As we slowly walked along.

See your face, all animated,
As we spoke of future years—
Years that seemed all bright and smiling,
Without griefs or sorrow's tears.

Sitting here I feel thy presence,
As the fireside glimmers bright;
Feel a very present nearness,
As my soul takes backward flight.

Mem'ries of sweet childhood teeming,
Like the rippling of a stream,
With the murmur of sweet music—
Fills me with a blissful dream.

All the buoyant hopes of childhood,
All the ships that sailed away—
All the dreams of fairy kingdom,
Blossomed, only to decay.

Yet tonight, while silent musing,
Both of present and of past,
I'm inclined to think that duty
Blossoms into joys that last.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

We can gather many lessons
From the dead and withered years;
Take the best that hope then gave us,
With our joys, were mingled tears.

If to duty we are faithful,
And for value, value give,
We will find, though faint and weary,
Hope will in fruition live.

THEY SENT SWEET FLOWERS

Though sore affliction laid me low
And kept me to my room,
The flowers that so sweetly blow
Have cheered me with their bloom.

The loving spirit that impels
The heart to sympathy,
Full many sorrows do dispel
And sooths all misery.

Oh, dear sweet friends, the lovely flow'rs
Cheered me with their sweet glow,
And helped me pass the painful hours
I had to undergo.

My heart will ever upward rise
In grateful gratitude
To God in love—above the skies—
Because you were so good.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THE SIGHING OF THE WIND

Did you ever hear the sighing,
Just like some poor mortal dying,
Of the wind when it was blowing
Through a grove of pine trees, growing?

'Tis a sound of soft, sad wailing,
Like some spirit, anguished ailing,
Slowly dying, sadly crying,
Sobbing, moaning, then defying.

'Tis a requiem for the dead,
This sad music overhead,
And the saddest of all sounds
That is heard in nature's bounds.

Oh, the painful sound of moaning,
Like a million spirits groaning,
Stirs within your heart a feeling
That with God you should be kneeling.

And the sobbing and the sighing,
As if multitudes were dying,
Brings upon you a strange creeping,
Like a ghost was at you peeping.

Yet I love to lie at ease,
Down beneath the green pine trees,
List'ning to the soft, sad sigh,
Drifting with it, like I'd die.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Now it sinks in dying note,
Like the choking of the throat;
Then arise in thundrous tones
Shrieks and sobs, then sadly, moans.

And beneath the pine trees list'ning,
In your eyes the tears are glist'ning;
For in nature God seems talking,
Wants you with Him to be walking.

In the language that is spoken
By the wind that seems heartbroken,
You will find a greater teacher
Than you'll find in any preacher.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

There's light and shadow here and there
Amongst the paths of life;
Dark clouds today—tomorrow fair—
Here, blossoms; and there, strife.

Today the sun is shining bright
With golden rays of hope;
Tomorrow, clouds of darkest night
In which we blindly grope.

Beneath a smile there often lies
A heart that's full of grief;
In secret there are sobs and sighs,
And many a withered leaf.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

REST YOU, STRANGER

Stranger, stop within this bower—
Rest you here for one short hour;
Life is filled with light and shadow,
On the hill top or the meadow;
Though the sun shines e'er so brightly,
It is ever darkened nightly;
Always clouds precede the showers
That refresh the lovely flowers,
And though roses beauty show,
Pricking thorns beneath them grow.

Art thou anxious to be going
And try life's seed to be sowing?
Pause, oh, stranger, and be careful—
Know the harvest's sometimes fearful!
Though at present good things meaning,
Dark may be thy future gleaning;
Many things in life beguiling,
Only tends to man's defiling,
And the siren's lustful call
May turn all your crop to gall.

Now, though rainbow tints are glowing,
On the morrow, may be snowing!
Though the sun today is thrilling,
Clouds tomorrow may be chilling;
Youth at early morn, oh, stranger,
Seldom think or dream of danger,
But with careless steps, unseeing,
Tread a path they should be fleeing;
Rest you, stranger, rest an hour
Here beneath this shady bower.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Pause, oh, stranger, stop your dreaming
With such pleasant future teeming;
Know that life is full of troubles
And hopes vanish like mere bubbles;
Know that aspirations winging
From the heart that now is singing
To the earth may fall tomorrow,
Filling this same heart with sorrow;
Every day, new life beginning,
Find the same old thread is spinning.

ETERNITY

Sailing on the mystic sea,
Sailing through eternity;
Sailing, ever sailing on
With a never-ending dawn.

Time hath reigned eternally—
No Alpha-Omega be—
Chaos never was begun,
Always—ever—has time run.

Sailing, sailing, there's no time
In eternity's old clime;
Ne'er exhausted is the sand
Of eternal ocean's strand.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I LOVE TO WANDER O'ER THE HILLS

I love to wander o'er the hills
In spring, when all is green;
And hear the murmur of the rills,
'Midst nature all serene.

I love to sit upon the banks
And watch the streamlets flow;
And raise to God my silent thanks,
While inward feelings glow.

I love the ripple and the splash,
The murmur of it all,
As over rocks they twist and dash,
And down the rapids fall.

I love to watch the golden glints
Of colors all a-glow—
In softest shades of rainbow tints
That mingle with their flow.

I love the low sweet song they sing,
That echoes in the breeze,
As curling, purling, murmuring,
They water roots of trees.

I love to lie in dreamy ease
And silent drift along,
Fanned by the gentle evening breeze,
Lulled by the rhythmic song.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ah, happy is the soul that lives
 'Midst nature's solitude,
Whose every thought and heart beat gives
 A throb of gratitude.

Who calmly moves 'midst nature's scene,
 Where many flowers blow,
Where swelling buds and fragrant green
 Sweet blessings do bestow.

WHEN THE SUNSET SOFT IS GLOWING

When the sunset soft is glowing,
And the western breeze is blowing,
All my dreamy thoughts go drifting
Out beyond where clouds are shifting,
To a land of hope's sweet ending,
Where fruition's joys are blending.

Ah, the beauty of its gleaming,
With a golden color beaming,
In the horizon, down dipping,
Like in ocean it was slipping,
Fills my heart with soft sweet dreaming
Of a land with angels teeming.

And the radiant glow, all tinting,
With a golden color glinting,
Seems to demonstrate the story
Of the mansions full of glory;
And a joyous time foretelling
When with God I shall be dwelling.

JOHN WILLIAM HEAD, JR.

Ring out, ring out, ye bells, and shout,
For all is joy and love;
A tender, lovely little sprout,
Has come from heav'n above.
God saw two lonely hearts that bled,
And in each eye a tear—
So He just sent John William Head
To comfort and to cheer.

YOU ASK ME?

You ask me why a cloud of shade
Doth ever o'er me spread,
And why my face, deep interlaid,
Shows that sweet joys have fled?
In early days of ardent youth,
I felt me full of cheer;
I thought the world was full of truth,
All goodness and sincere.

Just full of confidence and love
I wended on my way;
Each beat of heart was raised above,
And sunny was each day.
The birds all sang so sweetly then,
The flowers bloomed so fair;
I thought me naught but good of men—
My heart was free from care.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Each day bloomed into new-born hope,
And each day was a smile;
Bright pictured all the horoscope
With beauty to beguile.
The streams all sang so merrily,
My heart throbbed with delight;
And, ah, I wended cheerily
And sang both day and night.

But as the years passed swiftly by,
The withered leaves fell down
At call of autumn's mournful sigh,
And turned all sere and brown.
The flowers once that bloomed so fair
No longer beauty shed,
But 'mongst the dead leaves lying there
Seemed whispering, hope is dead.

The frost of winter nipped the bud
And chilled the balmy air,
And froze my ardent, youthful blood,
And killed hope with despair.
It left me all alone to grope
Amidst old nature bare,
All disillusioned, without hope,
And full of grief and care.

ROBIN RED BREAST

Oh, robin, sing your lays,
I've never heard you sing;
But Lowell speaks your praise,
As on the way you wing.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When cold the winters blow
And north is bleak and bare,
And driving sleet and snow
Makes icy cold the air—

You spread your wings and fly
To where the roses blow,
To sunny Southern sky,
And evening's golden glow.

There, you are mute and still,
For king of songsters sing;
The mocking bird's sweet trill
Just makes you droop your wing.

Yet I would not despise
Thy humble little note,
Should songs of thine arise
And on the breezes float.

God made the lovely rose,
He also made the weed
And everything that grows,
And each one fills a need.

We cannot all be king,
But we can fill our place,
And each of us can sing
With happy, smiling face.

Oh, robin, robin dear,
I love you, dear sweet bird,
And welcome you each year,
Though your song I've never heard.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A WHITE ROSE

Today a white rose
Doth gently repose
On my aching breast
To soothe its unrest.
For mother 'tis worn.
Though I am forlorn,
Her dear face I see
In sweet memory.
She's now in repose,
And many a rose
Blooms over her grave
And borders the pave.
And oft from the stem
I pluck one of them,
To wear o'er my heart
To soothe it in part.
Oh, white diadem
Of roses, the gem,
An emblem discreet
Of purity sweet,
Bloom over, this day,
Her cold bed of clay,
And over her head
A canopy spread

Of petals of white,
To chase away night.
Let each flower blend,
In beauty transcend,
To make the spot fair,
Without a compare,
For my mother
Is resting there.

A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE POEM, YOU SAY?

A beautiful little poem, you say?
Composed by one who has passed away;
The words so beautiful to the ear,
That in your album you placed it here?

No wording that I have ever known
Can equal the music, by winds blown,
Nor any that I have ever heard,
Compare in melody to a bird.

The gurgling music of one small brook,
Is sweeter than words in any book;
To gaze upon a beautiful rose
Gives greater pleasure than verse or prose.

Man has invented many an art;
To make life pleasant, has taken part;
But God made nature, just as you see—
It can't be improved by you and me.

A FADED LEAF

'Tis but a faded leaf
Has left its impress here,
Yet fills my heart with grief
For one I still hold dear.

'Twas forty years ago
Since first she placed it here;
She was in youth's young glow,
And gave her love sincere.

The years passed on and on,
Forgotten was the leaf;
But after she was gone
I found it in my grief.

'Twas crumpled with its age,
But left the impress still
Upon the open page,
And gave my heart a thrill.

I pressed the impress there,
Upon my quivering lips;
My heart, so full of care,
Throbbled with spasmodic grips.

Swift back my mem'ry flew
As I sat grieving there,
A retrospective view
I took, in my despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I thought of her sweet ways,
Her welcome, cheery kiss;
Of happy olden days
When life seemed full of bliss.

I thought of her first born,
Whose features I could trace;
Each breaking of the morn,
Her mother's darling face.

Of happy days sped by,
When she was by my side;
Of joy in earth and sky,
When she became my bride.

Then dark became the cloud,
When two pale forms lay there;
I bought a double shroud
To dress my darlings fair.

Then a white marble stone
Was placed between two graves,
And I was left alone
To sadly grieve and rave.

The years passed on and on,
My grief I did controul,
And yet each breaking dawn
They communed with my soul.

I've left a vacant space
Where shortly, side by side,
My body friends will place
Close by my sweet young bride.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And when the trumpets sound
And angels fill the air,
I'll answer with a bound
And meet my darlings there.

My hair's now white as snow,
My form is bent with age,
Now soon to them I'll go—
I've reached the seventh stage.

I'll close the book with care,
The impress I will leave,
If others find it here,
Pray for me do not grieve.

For I'll be gone above
To where there is no grief,
Where all is joy and love,
And there's no withered leaf.

I CANNOT SING

I cannot sing a song tonight,
The harp is out of tone,
And will not swell to lofty height,
But breaks down with a moan.

I am so full of worldly care,
So burdened with the load
My very soul seems to despair,
And rugged seems the road.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I've labored nearly three-score years,
I'm bending now with age;
I've shed some bitter scalding tears
In reading my life's page.

In glancing backward at the sheet
I'm startled at the sight,
And though repentance is complete,
'Tis no relief tonight.

I sit me here in gloomy thought
While sighs well from my heart,
And dwell on evil things I've wrought,
While conscience pain doth smart.

Oh, thou who readest all a-right,
Whose wisdom knoweth well
Temptations that we have to fight
To keep us out of hell—

Wilt thou with mercy deign to show
Me, just a little light,
As through the darkened paths I go,
With devils all to fight?

Be thou the staff to comfort me—
Come in my heart tonight,
And let me feel thy company,
My darkened soul to light.

THEY COLDLY PASS ME BY

Once men bowed humbly at my feet
And plead for just one smile,
Now they pass by me on the street,
Although one made me vile.

First blush of love, I gave my all
To one I thought sincere,
And now I suffer bitter gall
From taunt and scornful sneer.

Avoiding are the eyes I meet
From those I once held dear
Not one of them will kindly greet,
But from me coldly sheer.

Forced from my happy childhood's home
By all my loved one's scorn,
I'm forced 'midst sinful things to roam—
Heartbroken and forlorn.

He who was cause of my downfall,
Who promised me so fair,
Still on my girlhood friends do call,
And they seem not to care.

They greet him with a kindly smile—
For me—a chilling stare
Although 'twas he that made me vile
And filled me with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

On holy land Christ wrote on sand,
Let him first throw the stone
Who never sinned like Mary, and
Lo! they were left alone!

None say to me, "Go, sin no more,"
But lower try to shove;
Not e'en Christ's followers implore
To lift my soul above.

I do not sin from choice or lust—
I merely yield to fate;
The life I live fills with disgust
And all of it I hate.

I cannot raise myself alone—
Each day I bitter sigh,
For each one casts at me a stone
And coldly pass me by.

Does pity ever stir your heart
For fallen women, friend?
If so, then come and do your part
And help me life amend.

You all have mothers, this I know—
And some have sisters, too,
And some of them may fall also,
And shake you through and through.

There'd be none fallen but for men,
And this you know is true;
They once were innocent, you ken—
Still would be, but for you.

On Judgment Day, before God's throne,
You'll learn the truth at last
That in His judgment, sex's unknown,
And He'll reveal your past.

Then give me just one kindly glance
To help to better way;
Forgive the past and give me chance,
Don't pass me by today.

GOD STOOD UPON

God stood upon the summit's height
And beckoned me, come up;
I gazed with rapture on the sight,
And joy was in my cup.

The mountain's side was steep and bare,
My feet were bruised and sore;
Rough stones were scattered here and there,
Bespeaking pain in store.

Yet with His glory there in sight
I started up the side,
With hope to guide my feet a-right,
And faith to over-ride.

I slipped and stumbled on the way
And often fell full length;
But hope just cheered me, day by day,
And faith still gave me strength.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The ascent steeper grew each day,
And rougher seemed the road;
But ever hope cheered on the way,
And faith made light the load.

At last I reached the very place
Where last I saw Him stand;
And though I could not see His face,
By faith, I grasped His hand.

Hope, in fruition ended here,
And faith was lost in sight;
No longer had I pain or fear—
God filled my soul with light.

A SPIRIT OF LOVE

May my life breathe forth a spirit of love,
Enlivened with power born from above;
And may my light shine with such radiant glow
That many may seek salvation to know.

May my life—not my words—preach sermons each day,
That will live through ages, forever and aye;
And may each sermon prove a beacon of light,
To lift up the fallen, and make their paths bright.

Oh, write me down, then, as a lover of men,
A heart full of love, shining out from within;
And when at the last I am called to ascend,
May I leave behind me full many a friend.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A DREAM

Last night, while silence reigned supreme,
There came to me the sweetest dream
Of angels gathered 'round my bed,
Who o'er my couch sweet incense spread.

They were not friends who'd gone before
To dwell upon the other shore,
But were just angels, dressed in white,
Surrounded by a wondrous light.

Their voices sounded like sweet bells
That on the Easter morning tells
Of birth of Jesus, Lord of All,
Before whom we should prostrate fall.

A soft, sweet music seemed to fill,
Like gurgling waters in a rill—
Their snow-white robes of dazzling bright,
And floated out upon the night.

In each sweet feature I could trace
Resemblance to the dear Lord's face;
And each sweet face, a healing balm,
Each spoken word, a sweet old Psalm.

In rapture gazed I with delight,
For wondrous was the heavenly sight;
E'en to describe fills with despair,
For human words would but impair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The wak'ning dawn dispelled the dream,
But from the east there came a gleam
Of golden sunshine o'er the hill,
That gave my heart a soft sweet thrill.

It seemed a messenger just sent
To fill my heart with sweet content,
For every radiant glist'ning beam,
Reminded me of my sweet dream.

HOPE WITHOUT JUDGMENT

Hope without judgment counts but naught
In this old world of ours,
For nothing comes to us unsought,
Though we may picture flowers.

It never in fruition ends
Without an effort's made,
To do the things that mostly tends
Sweet fortune to persuade.

'Tis simply childish to believe
That good things come by chance;
And fortune's favors we receive,
Though we but idly dance.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Tis best that optimistic hope
Should dwell within the breast,
To picture all the future scope
In colors of the best.

That we might joyous 'ticipate
The future years to come,
And not our feelings agitate
With pessimistic glum.

But hope that makes the heart aspire
To nobler things attain,
Is something that will sure require
Both industry and brain.

Then let us judgment with hope blend
And do our very best,
That hope may in fruition end—
Then trust God with the rest.

MAN'S NOBLEST THOUGHTS

Man's noblest thoughts are mostly born
When quietude steals o'er his soul;
'Midst nature's haunts at early morn,
Where balms abound that do console.
There he can lift his soul above
A sordid world of sin and greed,
And 'midst the simple things of love
Find something better far, than creed.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

HOW STANDS THE BALLOT

Dark in the south
 (The voice was low);
Dark in the west
 ('Twas spoken slow).
Dark in the east, the Master said,
And slowly, sadly, shook his head.

All was silent—
 A dismal pall
Seemed to settle
 Upon them all.
The secretary's head was bent
In absolute astonishment.

Then to his feet
 A man arose,
With quiet air
 And noble pose,
And said, brethren, what has been done,
Affects my loved and only son.

While this is true
 Be ye not grieved.
For if he's wronged,
 Don't be deceived—
The man who acts from spite or hate,
Will in the end be desolate.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

It may not be
In spite or hate
The ball was cast.
I hesitate
To lay a charge that's so severe
On any brother Mason here.

My son is young
And may have sown
Some sinful seed,
To me unknown;
And if he should unworthy be,
Then, after all, 'tis best, you see.

'Tis true this pains—
My heart it hurts;
But if he's false,
'Tis his deserts
And he must suffer for his sin;
'Twould be but proper discipline.

But if he's true,
As men should be,
Then God will help
Both him and me
To bear up bravely to the end,
And soon or late the wrong amend.

The lodge was closed
The usual way;
A father's heart
Was stabbed that day.
Who cast the ball? They never knew—
The boy was noble, good and true.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

AN ANGEL GUARDS

An angel guards my path through life,
No matter where I roam;
All through this world of grief and strife,
On land or on the foam.

No matter where I pillow head,
I find the angel there
Prepared before, the softest bed,
Though it be but a lair.

And there I sleep this tenement—
This tenement of clay—
Until all weariness is spent
And dawns another day.

I ^{do}envy not the wealth I see,
For greater wealth in store
The angel has prepared for me,
Upon the other shore.

My heart is full of sweet content,
I calmly drift along;
My soul is with God's spirit blent
And fills me full of song.

He doth my sorrows all dispel,
He leadeth by the hand;
Some day in heaven I shall dwell
And with the angel stand.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

MUSING

In the twilight's soft'ning glow,
Shadows flitting to and fro,
Arched the skies like palace dome,
Frescoed with a flowery foam;
Twinkling stars in clustering crowd,
With a beauty God endowed,
Angels floating in the clouds,
Streaming out their pure white shrouds—
Birds all singing sweet and low
Where wild flowers, many blow;
In the soft sweet Southern gloam
Like a lover I will roam,
For emotion sweetly flows
As the evening twilight glows.

THERE'S A PLEASANT LITTLE BOWER

There's a pleasant little bower
Where I go at twilight hour,
Just to spend a few sweet moments all alone;
There the trailing vine and flower,
'Midst the trees that upward tower,
Lifts my heart above to God in heav'nly zone.

There I lie in silence dreaming,
While my heart with love is beaming,
And sweet memory flies backward on the wing;
For my mind with visions teeming
Sees dear faces all a-gleaming,
And my heart returns to youthful days o' spring.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, the joyous, youthful pleasure
That the heart will ever treasure,
In the sweet old days of childhood long ago;
When in times of sweetest leisure,
Full of 'joyment without measure,
All our hearts with ardent love did sweetly glow.

But the years pass on and sever
Ties that will come back, no, never;
But in memory those ties are buried deep;
And though cold and distant, ever,
In your heart you ne'er can sever
For a thought of them quite oft will o'er you creep.

So when cometh twilight hour,
Unto memory's sweet bower,
Oft I go to spend a moment all alone;
There with trailing vine and flower,
'Midst the trees that upward tower,
My full heart is raised to God in heav'nly zone.

I WONDER

When sinks the sun in golden west
And twilight soft appears,
I think of those whom I loved best,
The friends of early years.

When stars are twinkling overhead
And nature seems all still,
I think of all the loved ones dead,
And wonder at God's will.

I wonder why He took the best
And left the weakest here,
A-seeking o'er the earth for rest,
Filled with suspense and fear?

I wonder, when I take review
At strangeness of decree,
That He should take the good and true,
And leave just you and me.

Then as I wonder at God's will
I think 'tis manifest
That He doth all of heaven fill
With just the very best.

THE EVENING SHADOWS

The evening shadows of my life
Are drawing to a close;
I soon must leave this worldly strife
And with the dead repose.

In glancing back, the bygone years
Seem misty, like a dream;
The fearsome thoughts and foolish tears
Return in memory's gleam.

Experience hath now revealed
The follies of my youth,
And though from all the world concealed,
The Father knows the truth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave no thought in youthful glow
About the final end;
Nor that old age life's blood would slow
And mortal frame would bend.

My ardent blood flowed swift and warm,
With all of youth's hot fire;
I thought not of a grief or harm,
But yielded to desire.

Now, looking back on those sad years,
So full of sin and stain,
Remorseful conscience starts the tears
And fills my heart with pain.

For many years I've tried to mend
The wrongs that I have done,
That in the end, when I ascend,
I'd be with God's own Son.

THEY SAY WE CANNOT SING SO WELL

They say we cannot sing so well
When fifty years have passed;
That though a song from us may swell,
Its music will not last.
I'm sure they must mistaken be,
For God calls forth the song,
And ever will its melody
Through ages float along.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

No spoken word of sweetness yet
Has ever been destroyed,
Though for a time we may forget,
'Twill be again employed.
Its music sweet, in after years,
Will float out on the breeze,
And memory will start the tears
And many a heartache ease.

An old man's song, with fragrance sweet,
Is not to be despised;
His noble thoughts, in language mete,
Are oft immortalized.
God whispers to him as of old—
He tunes the dear old lyre,
And sings the song in language bold,
As God doth him inspire.

As long as God inspires the song
Immortal it will be,
And though the years may pass along,
You'll hear its melody.
For songs inspired come from above,
And never lose their power;
They fade, then rise beneath God's love,
Just like a lovely flower.

I CAN ONLY SING AN HUMBLE SONG

I can only sing you an humble song,
To cheer your spirit as you drift along.
I've nothing to say that you do not know,
As through life's pathway you ploddingly go.

But if you gaze on the beauty each day
That is spread out to view in your pathway,
'Twill lighten the burden, the toil and the care,
And take from your heart all grief and despair.

Soul beauty is found in many a face,
Beneath scars and wrinkles that you may trace;
And many a gem that is hidden from view,
May be brought to light—discovered by you.

The beauty you find may often impart
A joy that may heal some poor broken heart
And brighten with smiles a face once of woe,
That may cause your own and others to glow.

OPPORTUNE

Keep ever hope before you,
And do your level best;
Ne'er let despondence sink you,
But struggle with the rest.

Though darkened clouds may hover,
Just bear this truth in mind:
That opportune's a rover,
And may be just behind.

Just bear up with a stout heart
And laugh misfortune down,
And nobly do your own part—
Then opportune will crown.

New crops are gathered yearly—
They grow on the same ground;
And if you'll work sincerely
The harvest will abound.

But if you sit down daily
And fold your hands and sigh,
Old opportune, quite gaily,
Will skip and pass you by.

I FIRST SAW AND LOVED HER

I first saw and loved her
In morn's early life,
When flowers were blooming,
Their beauty all rife.
The spring buds were swelling,
And carpets of green
Spread over the landscape—
A beautiful scene.

The songs of all nature
Seemed singing to me,
As near her I sat 'neath
The shade of a tree.
Each eye told the story—
The story of love—
Transporting to glory,
To heaven above.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Soon after, we wedded
And moved in a cot,
And children have blest us—
Ah, happy's our lot!
We are aging and gray,
Our heart beats are true,
We have naught to regret,
Have nothing to rue.

Now, downhill we travel,
We'll soon pass away,
And rest us together
Beneath the cold clay.
Our lives have been happy,
Surrounded by love—
Together we'll journey
To heaven above.

WHEN DOUBTS ASSAIL

When doubt assails my fainting heart
And dark doth seem the hour,
I throw myself, majestic God,
On Thy almighty pow'r.

I cannot comprehend Thy way,
Nor what Thou hast in view;
The clouds seem darker day by day,
That hidest false from true.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I cast me down on beds of doubt
Without a staff or guide;
My heart, all human, sometimes flout,
And cast the Christ aside.

Yet with all human reasoning
The way seems dark and drear,
If I but knew the truth I'd sing,
And Thou canst make it clear.

Shouldst Thou but deign to hear my prayer,
Remove the cloud of doubt,
Each day would seem more wondrous fair,
And I would sing and shout.

THE RIVER OF TEARS

The river of sobs, and sighs and tears,
Is ever flowing along,
Filled with the debris of worldly cares,
Drearly singing its song.

Borne on its bosom are griefs and sighs,
Sickness and sorrows and pain,
Ever renewing from darkened skies
The sad and hopeless refrain.

It mournfully sighs in winds that blow,
And wafts it from tree to tree,
Like ghostly spirits wailing their woe
In sorrow and misery.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Deep, deep, is the stream of human woes,
And deeper, lost hope's despair
Is wringing the heart with voiceless throes
Of many a grief and care.

Borne on its current, the drifting weed
Of many a sin-sick soul,
Reaping the harvest of past sown seed,
Is carried without control.

Out on the ocean's volume so vast,
Where the tide ebbs to and fro,
Sooner or later the debris is cast
And sinks to the depth below.

Ever returning for human freight,
Beginning again once more,
Soon is its bosom filled with the weight
Of those who were left before.

* * * * *

Again the drifting without control,
Again the wailing of many a soul,
Again to the ocean's mighty deep,
The debris will sink in one vast heap.

LONELY AMIDST THE CROWD

I live alone amidst the crowd
That daily pass me by;
And though unknown, I am too proud
To give way to a sigh.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave my heart's sweet youthful glow,
In early manhood's prime,
To one I thought as pure as snow,
Who would make life sublime.

Ah, disappointing were the years,
And sorrow's paths I trod;
Each day seemed full of grief and tears,
And heavy was the rod.

An ever-present, aching void,
Was always by my side;
No matter how I was employed,
'Twould in my heart abide.

My loving heart was choked with grief,
With agony and woe;
No Balm of Gilead for relief
Could I find here below.

In moody silence, day by day,
I plodded 'long life's road;
No ray of hope to cheer the way,
Or lighten up the load.

As years passed on and children came,
I thought me, now, indeed,
The blessings of sweet love will flame—
My hungry heart to feed.

But scarce they'd reached sweet youth's estate,
When I discovered fair,
Their mother had taught them to hate,
And filled me with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

So I am lonely in the crowd
Surrounding me each day;
Although a smile my feelings shroud,
My heart is sad and gray.

I look me back upon the years
When life seemed joyous, bright,
And pray to God with anguished tears,
To take me home tonight.

Perhaps when life's turmoil is past
And spirits leave the clay,
We will be reconciled at last,
And joy will fill each day.

Then with my early choice of life,
With children by her side—
Forgetting worldly hate and strife,
We may in love abide.

ROOM FOR ME

They say in God's house there's room for me,
And always there will a welcome be;
All furnished in white, where angels dwell,
And glory to God. the story tell.
That the rooms all bright with love's sweet tone,
Are tempered with joy from God's own throne.
That naught there is dark, for He is light—
His glory so great, makes heaven bright.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

That all there is joy, and angels sing
A message of peace, good tidings bring.
That 'round His white throne the harps resound,
And melody sweet doth there abound.
That gathered are saints, whose faces light
Reflects from God, a glorious sight.
That great angel throngs float in the air,
With heavenly forms—wondrously fair.
That all's so content in that dear home,
No wandering sheep from it will roam.
That pastures are sweet in his domain—
There's no weary feet, no sigh, no pain.
That waters serene do gently flow,
All sparkling with sheen and heavenly glow.
That on the green banks, with shade above,
Swell voices of thanks for His great love.
Oh, then if it's true, there's room for me,
New life I'll pursue with jubilee.
I'll kneel at His throne both morn and night,
Until He says, "Come soul, take they flight."

I NEVER THOUGHT OF DEATH

In youth I never thought of death,
It seemed so far away;
Nor of a time when, void of breath,
They'd lay me in the clay.
But now, as twilight draweth near,
Death's shadow seems to fall
Across my pathway, and I hear
The spirits softly call.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Like soft sweet chimings of a bell,
That calls to evening prayer,
Their voices ever seem to tell
Of rest from toil and care.
Then, with an angel for my guide,
I'll cross the silv'ry strand,
And there, with loved ones by my side,
Dwell in the heav'nly land.

IF YOU ESTEEM ME

If you esteem me as you say,
Place flowers on their graves;
My heart turns to them every day,
And for them ever craves.

I picture desolation there,
Without a single bloom;
No loved one near to tend or care,
Or brighten up the gloom.

If one rose bush was placed between
The two forms lying there,
To blossom in the spring, I ween
'Twould make the spot more fair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And if each mound with pinks was bound,
Their brilliant colors rare
Would spread around upon the ground—
A beauty sweet and fair.

Then clean the spot around their lot
And make it fair to view;
Place at each head a flower pot,
As I would do for you.

A WEE LITTLE FLOWER

A wee little flower
By the side of a road,
Refreshed by the shower
Of a dewdrop, abode
In a shady bower,
Just thistles above;
But never an hour
Did it suffer for love.

God made the wee flower,
With a beauty so rare;
He gave angels power
To guard it with care.
And every sweet moment
The wee flower grew,
Its blood was a-foment
And tinting with blue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Maturing in beauty
The wee flower grew,
Attentive to duty—
A lesson to you.
Content by the wayside
In sweet virtue's ways,
With God for its guide,
It lived all its days.

Now, Lydia:

May you ever be true
And content with your lot,
Though possessions be few
And your home but a cot.
May your heart be a home
For sweet love to dwell in—
Not a thought that will roam
Into paths of old sin.

IN MY LADY'S GARDEN

In my lady's garden,
Many roses blow,
Seeking, ever seeking,
The secret of her glow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Cheeks are red with blushes,
Like a golden sky;
Rose, though red with flushes,
Cannot with them vie.

Soft the rose's petals,
Softer still her cheek,
Though the rose has beauty,
Her presence makes them meek.

Golden glow of evening
Tints her lovely face;
Though the rose has sheening,
Still they have not her grace.

Drop your head, oh, roses!
Drop your head and die—
For my lady passes,
And you cannot with her vie.

OH, DESTINY, THOU BREATH OF GOD

Oh, destiny, thou breath of God!
What mystery so great?
Thou rulest us with chast'ning rod,
And we cannot escape.
From dust we came—to dust return—
And thus ends human hope,
Yet mortal heart doth ever yearn
And for immortal grope.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The light of God's but dimly seen
By mortals here below,
Yet ever try to pierce the screen,
That hope may brighter glow.
The body must return to dust,
Forever to remain;
But what becomes of life is just
What we can ne'er explain.

Unchangeable are nature's laws,
And these laws govern all;
Old destiny, with eagle claws,
Securely doth enthrall.
We can't escape from destined way—
Our lives were foreordained;
Though we may ever weep and pray,
The law is still maintained.

The life that leaves the melting frame
May have another law,
Where, free from earthly lust and shame,
Be able to withdraw,
And choose a pathway of its own
In spirit world above—
That may, some day, lead to a throne
Of Godly peace and love.

But laws that govern human-kind
Are never changed below;
To all the future we are blind,
And fate we never know.

We come into this world unsought
And breathe a few brief hours;
When scarcely is our life's work wrought,
We droop and fall like flowers.

TREAD SOFTLY, SHE'S DYING

Tread softly, she's dying—
Dying alone—
Reaping the harvest
Of sin she has sown.
Speak to her kindly
In whisper's low tone—
See! she is crying
That mercy be shown.

In this poor hovel
She lies here, unknown—
Soon in a pauper's
Grave she will be thrown.
None of her people
But what would disown—
For fallen is she
From fair virtue's throne.

If 'twas her brother,
He'd not be alone—
Friends to his bedside
Long since would have flown.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

But 'twas the sister
By sin overthrown—
Never since that day
Has kindness been shown.

Speak to her gently,
For now she'd atone!
Pray, for she begs
With a deep, anguished groan,
She humbly seeks pardon
With a sob and a moan—
Begs you in mercy
Her sins to condone.

Speak to her kindly
And she'll cease to moan;
Perhaps from her eyes
A smile may be shown.
Lead her to dream
Of a happier zone,
Then she'll pass out
Without murmur or groan.

Pray she may some day
Reach heaven's white throne,
Where all is forgiven
And kindness is shown;
Where in God's judgment
No difference is shown
To male or female—
Where sex is unknown.

YE HILLS AND DALES

Ye hills and dales and valleys green,
Ye mountains lofty heights,
Ye glens and meadows in between,
'Midst nature's wondrous sights;
My heart with rapture upward wings
And throbs with joy's delights,
While heavenly music inward rings,
And soul takes upward flights.

Ye mossy dells, where ever dwells
A rhythmic murmur low,
Like chiming bells that softly tells
Where waters sweetly flow,
Ye fill my heart with godly love
And pleasure here below,
Like olive leaf in mouth of dove,
Caused Noah's heart to glow.

Ye silent nooks and singing brooks,
Ye rippling little rills,
Ye streams that flow in twist and crooks
And fill my heart with thrills,
Ye little know the ardent glow
That all my being fills,
As down the mountain sides you flow,
To feed the many mills.

Ye mountain peaks that silent speaks,
Ye vales so far below,
Sometimes in freaks, all beauty streaks
Ye with a golden glow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ye mountain pine, in the sunshine,
You, distant beauty show,
While tangled vine doth intertwine
Around your trunk below.

I love each scene in nature green,
I love the woods and streams;
I love to wander all serene
And dream sweet fairy dreams.
I love each hill and mountain rill,
The moonlight and sunbeams,
The silence still, that heart doth thrill,
Amidst old nature's schemes.

WAITING FOR THE CALL

I'm simply waiting for the call
Of loved ones gone before;
There's not one now that's left of all—
They're on the other shore.

They left me many years ago
To journey all alone;
And grief has made my head like snow,
And oft I sigh and moan.

My trembling form is bent with age,
My lamp is out of oil;
I've entered on my life's last stage—
I'll soon be freed from toil.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

My spirit soon will take its flight—
It may be midnight's call
When God shall say, soul, come tonight,
And then, farewell to all.

Though soul may tremble with appall
As upward I ascend,
I'll try through faith to trust it all,
And with His spirit blend.

And when at last I reach His throne
And find my loved ones there,
I'll thank the Lord for mercies shown,
In heartfelt praise and prayer.

WHEN FRIENDS OF YOUTH

When friends of youth have passed away
And left you all alone,
You wander lonesome, day by day,
And often sigh and moan.
The world, all selfish, pass you by
And seek for pleasure gay,
No time or care for sob or sigh,
Nor for the a-ged gray.

You live a life or retrospect—
They, in prospective joy.
The dead old past they all reject
And a-ged thoughts annoy.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The buoyant blood of ardent youth,
Like swelling buds of spring,
Leave age behind without a ruth—
Pass on with eagle wing.

Age finds sweet pleasure in the past—
In plucking withered leaves,
In wandering in garden vast,
Where mem'ry backward weaves;
In dreaming of the days of yore
When youthful hopes were bright,
And of the loved ones gone before
To heaven's immortal light.

Ah, lonely is each passing day,
And how the heart doth yearn
To wrench the spirit from the clay
And a new life discern.
To leave this world of strife and tears
And in new regions roam,
With friends we loved in early years—
In God's own heavenly home.

DON'T FORGET TO READ YOUR BIBLE

Don't forget to read your Bible, boy,
While out upon the road;
It will give your dear old mother joy
And lift a heavy load.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Read the place that she has marked for you,
And heed the message there;
It will make your heart more nobly true,
And keep you from despair.

Read the Proverbs filled with good advice,
Apply them to your life;
Keep your thoughts upon sweet paradise,
Forgetting sin and strife.
Read the prophet's message, good and clear,
About God's only Son;
Keep your body clean and heart sincere
And He will say, well done.

Read the Psalms for consolation sweet
Whene'er you are downcast,
They will tend to make your joy complete
And you'll forget the past.
Let your mind dwell on the cleanly things
While mixing with the world,
Let your soul float out on heav'nly wings,
Christ's banner keep unfurled.

Let your heart be filled with charity
For all your fellowman,
And remember them upon your knee
And help them all you can.
If you'll heed the words that's written here,
While dwelling on this earth,
You will fill poor grieving hearts with cheer
And prove yourself of worth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHAT DOST THINE EYES SEE?

Poet, what dost thine eyes see,
Gazing out so earnestly?
When I follow with my gaze,
Blazing sunshine doth but daze!
Every day I see the same
Efforts made for wealth and fame,
Though a wealth of beauty lie
At our feet, we pass them by;
Yet in melody thy voice
Ever seemeth to rejoice,
Seeing beauty all around
Everywhere in nature's bound.

Poet of the woods and fields,
In abandon thy heart yields
To the call of nature dear
Every season of the year.
Though the leaves are sere and brown,
From the tree tops falling down,
Still thine eyes doth only see
Traces left of spring's beauty.
Is not what thine eyes behold,
Autumn's season turned to gold,
Purple here and yellow there—
Dead, yet beautiful and fair?

Poet, like immortal hope,
Think you that these dead leaves grope
For another season yet,
Where life's sap is ever wet,
Where the green doth ever wave,
Freshened by the dews that lave?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Or unconscious of their fate,
Molder into other state,
Springing up from mellow ground
With new beauty to astound—
Ever changing, living on
Till doth end creation's dawn?

Poet, tell me, tell me true,
What you see in skies of blue?
Do you view immortal life
Far away from mortal strife?
Can the finite vision see
Into God's eternity?
Or must we in darkness grope
With no light to cheer our hope,
Reaching here and reaching there,
Trembling hearts filled with despair,
Ever stumbling on the way,
Till doth come the Judgment Day?

Poet, I would fain to know
All this mystery below;
Why man should immortal be,
From God's anger ever flee?
Could a sin within me flow
E'en before I knew life's glow?
Must I suffer grief and pain
For the crime of brother Cain?
Is it just that I should be
Held for this eternally?
Has not God some greater plan
That will help poor fallen man?

Poet, what is life to man
That he should so earnest plan
Future years of joyous hope
With the foe, grim death, to cope?
See you youth as well as age
Fall before old grim death's rage?
Nothing's certain here on earth,
Death begins the day of birth!
Yet he ever drives and slaves,
Earthly things he ever craves
Though he may attain life's span,
Three score ten doth end the man.

Poet, if immortal life
Frees us from all pain and strife,
Dwelling in a higher zone,
Where no grief or care is known,
Why should man so dread the day
When the soul departs the clay?
Hast thou seen the face of woe
Of a soul that feared to go?
How the trembling, craven clod
Feared to meet the unknown God?
If of truth he could but know,
'Stead of fear, would his heart glow?

Poet, tell me of the soul!
What influence doth control;
If not He who rules the world,
Who, old sinful Satan hurled
Down from heaven's high estate,
Here on earth to foment hate?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When it leaves the frame of clay,
What become of it, I pray?
Does it journey to the west,
Ever seeking blessed rest?
Or to east, where sun doth rise,
Ever flashing to the skies?

Poet, is its haven there,
Floating in the ether air?
Or must it be ever on
Till eternity shall dawn?
Is there ne'er a resting place,
Or must still it onward race?
Does it wander all alone
In that vast and endless zone?
Or does other spirits there
Point the way with love and care,
And encourage with a song,
As they journey all along?

Poet, life's a mystery,
Borne out by man's history;
Endless chains in brain doth weave,
Mighty things he doth achieve.
Yet a few brief years doth lay
His weak frame in melting clay.
Does his greatness still aspire
Upward from his bed of mire?
Does his intellect or thought
Perfect things on earth not wrought?
Or unconscious breathless lie
While eternal ages fly?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Poet, though he may not know
Even simple things below,
And this life may often seem
Like a misty, phantom dream,
Yet sweet hope doth e'er impart
Consolation to the heart.
Then we hear the song birds sing,
And the soul doth upward wing,
Soaring high with pinions spread
All exulting overhead,
To a land of golden glow,
Where sweet waters ever flow.

Poet, the great mystery,
Veiled from all humanity,
Fills my heart with great amaze,
Leaves me groping in a daze;
Yet when gazing with thine eyes,
Beauty of both earth and skies
Throbs my heart with such delight,
Soul seems taking upward flight.
And I doubt me not at all
That it is some higher call,
Coming from a throne above,
Filled with an eternal love.

A PRAYER

We approach Thy presence, Lord,
Trusting in Thy promised word;
Kneeling here at mercy's throne,
All our wants to Thee are known.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In the Book that's for our guide, •
Thou hast said what e'er betide,
What we'd ask in faith and love
Would be granted from above.

Now incline Thine ear, we pray,
Grant our wishes, Lord, today;
Hard and grievous are our cares,
Mingled tears are with our prayers.

Ah, the road is rough and steep,
Oft with weary hearts we weep,
For the heavy burdens bear
And our frames sink with despair.

Day by day we plod along,
Sometimes cheered by hope's sweet song,
But more often feel the prod
Of misfortune's hated rod.

Then our cup is filled with tears,
Mingled with suspense and fears, •
While our hands are closely prest
'Gainst an aching, throbbing breast.

Pain to body soon is past,
Mental anguish oft doth last;
Fend us from the last, we pray,
For the first ends with the day.

But the anguish of the mind,
No solace for it we find;
But like cup of bitter tears,
Recalls past and sinful years.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ah, the corpse of other years,
How they fill our hearts with fears!
Though we lock the closet tight,
Yet they fill our souls with fright.

And in private, if by chance,
Backward in our hearts we glance,
See the spectre standing there—
Ah, it fills us with despair.

We can hide from all but Thee,
Hide past years of misery;
But to self and Thee is known
All the sins that we have sown.

Help us to forget the past,
Help it from our minds to cast—
Root it up and throw it out,
Then with joy we'll sing and shout.

RESENTMENT

In looking back the bitter years
Since you and I were wed,
And thinking of the flood of tears
That I so often shed—
I would not live the life again
That you condemned me to,
That caused me so much shame and pain,
And other things to rue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave my girlhood love to you—
I gave my very all,
And thought that you were good and true,
So god-like and so tall!
I trusted in your promise fair
That you'd be true to me;
That I'd receive both love and care,
And happiness, from thee.

Ah, bitter has been all the years
That once seemed bright and fair,
And agonizing were the tears
I shed in my despair.
Like leaves that drop to autumn's call—
All dead, no living breath—
My heart has turned to bitter gall,
By you, it met its death.

I'M THINKING OF YEARS

I'm thinking of years that have gone,
Of many dear friends that I knew,
In days of sweet youth's early dawn,
Whose heartbeats were loving and true.

'Midst rustic scenes, where I once played,
Where rustling leaves swayed to the breeze,
I often met with a sweet maid,
As fair as spring blossoms on trees.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Fond memory over me waves
As backward I glance o'er time's sea,
And deeply my heart ever craves
Her presence one moment with me.

Her eyes were like violets blue,
Her cheeks like the full blushing rose,
Her breath like the fresh morning dew,
When buds and sweet blossoms uncloze.

They buried her 'neath the green trees,
And song birds are nesting above;
Their voice in the sweet balmy breeze
Are chanting a requiem of love.

Ah, when I look back on the past
And see the dead hopes lying there,
My soul in affright stands aghast—
For once they were blooming and fair.

MOCKING BIRD

Hail to thee, oh, mocking bird,
Sweetest singer ever heard,
Mocking every bird you meet,
Imitating them complete;
Gushing forth a song of praise,
Filling us with sweet amaze;
There's no songster can compete
With your melody so sweet.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Caroling your lovely lay
From the morn till close of day,
And at night, when moonbeams peep,
Lulling us to restful sleep,
How thy soft sweet tones doth calm,
Listening to thy soft sweet psalm.
Like an angel 'gaged in prayer,
Thy sweet voice our hearts ensnare.

And when filled with love's romance,
Thou, sweet bird, our souls entrance.
Nightingale cannot compare
To thy saucy, mocking air;
Emperor and czar and king,
Thou art all when thou dost sing;
Nothing that on wings do fly,
Can with thee in music vie.

When the dogwoods are in bloom
And the birds, with song and plume,
Mate, and build their nest on tree,
Though they fill us with their glee,
Yet 'tis not like thy sweet song
Floating on the breeze along;
And we're sure you mortify
All the songsters flitting by.

COME, GWENDOLINE

Come, Gwendoline, and go with me;
We'll sit beneath the old oak tree
Where first we met and plighted love,
And swore our troth by all above.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Again we'll dream of our sweet youth,
When life seemed full of joy and truth,
And every day eternal spring
And buds and blossoms seemed to sing.

The music of the brooklet's stream
Will add to pleasure of the dream;
And as the waters gently flow
We'll feel again youth's ardent glow.

We'll listen to sweet nature's song,
'Midst wildwood scenes forget all wrong.
We'll pluck wild flowers and green fern,
And let sweet mem'ry backward turn.

Ah, me, we're bent with many years,
Seen blasted hopes and bitter tears;
Seen disillusion of our dream—
Seen loss of friendships and esteem.

We'll forget days forever gone
And see new birthed a brighter dawn,
Forgetting for a moment brief
The cares of life, its pain and grief.

Then come with me, dear Gwendoline,
Back to our youth's field, just to glean
One grain of fruit left standing there
And store it in our hearts with care.

TO MAGGIE

Could I but lean this aching heart
'Gainst that sweet heart of thine,
Its throbbing pain would all depart,
And heaven's joy'd be mine.

Wouldst thy lips yield me but one kiss,
One kiss with soft sweet sigh,
'Twould fill my very soul with bliss,
And fevered ecstasy.

If in thine eyes I could but trace
One timid spark of love,
And see love's blush spread o'er thy face,
'Twould lift my soul above.

Then give to me one moment's bliss—
An embrace with a sigh—
The ecstasy of one sweet kiss,
And then—just let me die.

HELEN ADAM KELLER

(Blind, Deaf and Dumb)

Moving in a world of darkness,
Soul so full of grateful love!
How we, in our selfish sharpness,
Smite ourselves in self reprove.
Could we penetrate the shadow
Of the paths that thy feet tread,

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

See the beauties of the meadow
Where thy lovely flowers spread,
All this world, with human kindness
Would some loving deed express,
For all selfish human blindness
Would be changed to hearts that bless.

Oh, the sacred hidden beauties
Thy dark eyes alone doth see,
With a heart to fulfill duties
On a dark and starless sea,
Must be heav'nly in their glory,
Hid from all the world but thee,
For we only hear the story
As thy darkened eyes doth see.
Then, if listen'ing to the story
Brings to us a sweet new light,
From dark paths so full of glory,
What must it be to thine own sight?

CONTEMPT

May I deep contempt ever keep
For puerile minds that snarl and creep
With hateful malice in their heart,
For those who choose the nobler part
Of life—whose intellects are well
Above them, like heaven from hell.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Poor, slimy, little weazened mind,
'Tis strange indeed that God, so kind,
Should find a place on earth for you.
For when we get an inward view
Of all the little things that brew
In such a mind, it makes us spew.

Go, worm; go hide away with care,
You only poison God's pure air;
The scent upon you is so foul
It brings upon one's face a scowl;
Go live away from men of worth
Until good thoughts you can give birth.

But if your mind remains still shrunk,
Adopt a comrade from a skunk;
'Twould prove congenial to your soul,
And both could live in the same hole;
Then you could live on all that's foul—
A rat, a lizard, or an owl.

But as the two of you will blend,
Don't bring your odor to offend
Us, with that awful nasty smell,
'Twould drive us to the brink of hell!
And sure we'd rather be there, too,
Than 'sociate with such as you.

RESULT OF ANCIENT WRONGS

The wrongs imposed by potentates,
By emperors and tzars,
Has caused old Europe's many states
To shake with cannon jars.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

They lie now helpless in the dust,
While chaos reigns supreme,
And hopeless, crave for just one crust,
That they might life redeem.

It is ordained the innocent
Must sometimes suffer, too;
And oft their very souls are rent
For what the guilty do.
With careless thought they passed wrong up,
Bowed down to a false god,
Until at last the bitter cup,
God's sure and chast'ning rod.

The blood-stained land is bleeding now,
The people in despair,
Upon their knees most humbly bow
In supplicating prayer.
If He who heeds the sparrow's fall
Doth gently stir your heart,
You'll listen to their anguished call
And gladly do your part.

Let's lift them up with hope's sweet cheer
And help them all we can;
Remove their sorrow and their fear,
And help them future plan.
Oh, let your heart with love expand
And lift these poor ones up;
Extend to them a helping hand,
Remove the bitter cup.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

FOUR SEASONS

Autumn, winter, spring and summer—
Each one has its tear;
Though in spring some joys we number,
Winter's cold and drear.
In the autumn leaves are falling,
Cover all the ground,
Bringing to us thoughts appalling,
Solemn and profound.

Summer, with the full blown roses,
Radiant and fair,
To the human heart discloses
God's great love and care.
In the autumn, birds are leaving
For a warmer clime,
And full many hearts are grieving
For their songs sublime.

In the winter, cold breeze blowing,
Freezes to the bone;
Sun is dimmed, and often snowing,
Makes you shake and moan.
But in spring, when buds are swelling,
And you venture out,
It just seems with God you're dwelling,
And you sing and shout.

Every season has its pleasure,
Also has its tear;
There's no joy without a measure
Of a little fear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN LEAVES ARE TURNING

When leaves are turning sere and brown
And autumn winds are blowing,
And one by one all tumbling down,
Just like the trees were snowing,
I love to wander 'midst the scene
Of nature all a-changing,
And of the autumn's harvest glean
Gold leaves for crown arranging.

It takes me back to early days,
"The days of school vacation,"
When boys and girls of happy ways,
"The future of the nation,"
Just made old nature's woods to ring
With shouts of animation.
As with oak leaves they crowned a king,
Then queen, to fit his station.

I love to take the golden leaves
To deck sweet mem'ry's bower;
I love to, when my spirit grieves,
Gaze at them by the hour;
For when my thoughts go back the years,
With memory all churning,
My eyes are filled with heartfelt tears.
And turns to them with yearning.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

FINIS

I leave you all now, and gracefully bow,
I hope that the book will give pleasure;
That no frowning brow, the reading will endow,
But that you may find some sweet treasure.
They're but simple rhymes, composed in spare times,
And some of them without true measure;
Great truths you will find quite oft interlined,
You may trace them out at your leisure.

J. M. HICKMAN,
Earle, Arkansas.

